



Vicki Deisner
State Legislative Director for the
Midwest Region

Post Office Box 228
Worthington, Ohio 43085-0228

Vicki.deisner@aspca.org
646.596.0321

www.aspca.org
www.aspcapro.org

January 30, 2013

Senator Joe Hune
Senate Agriculture Committee
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909

RE: SB 48

Dear Chairman Hune:

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA is the first humane organization established in the Americas and serves as the nation's leading voice for animal welfare. We have a large grants program and in 2012, we awarded over \$174,600 to communities in Michigan.

The ASPCA's mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States, and for that reason we are opposed to **SB 48 and which would allow the public handling of bear cubs which would pose serious threats to public safety.**

If SB 48 were to become law, Michigan's captive bear exhibitors, who have a history of serious welfare and safety issues, would endanger the public by allowing them to come into contact with and handle bear cubs. It is critical that we protect the public and Michigan's bears because:

- 1) The practice of handling and using bear cubs for photo opportunities with the public seriously compromises animal welfare and threatens public safety. It is extremely stressful for bear cubs to be prematurely removed from their mothers – a common practice to facilitate public handling. **Young cubs are capable of inflicting painful injuries and a young bear cub, as outlined in this bill, could weigh up to 90 pounds and be interacting with young children. This is a serious public safety risk.**
- 2) SB 48 will result in an increase in the state's captive bear population, and unfortunately, unwanted and potentially discarded bears. The Large Carnivore Act has protected Michigan's bears from being bred for this purpose for over a decade – there is no justification to amend this act now.
- 3) SB 48 will allow Michigan's bear exhibitors, which have a history of serious welfare and safety issues, to endanger the public by allowing direct contact with dangerous wild animals.

For all of these reasons, **The ASPCA respectfully opposes SB 48 which would allow the public handling of bear cubs which would pose serious threats to public safety.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

Vicki Deisner, Esq.
Midwest Legislative Director
ASPCA
614/493-8383
vicki.deisner@aspca.org